

Usage Dependent Ticket to Protect Copy-protected Material

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A usage-limit is associated with each copy of copy-protected material. A
5 conforming playback device determines how much usage has been made of the copy, and
only plays the copy-protected material if the usage is within the associated usage-limit of
the copy. In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the providing source of the copy
contains a total-usage-measure that is allocated among each of the provided copies of the
copy-protected material, thereby allowing for more than one copy of the copy-protected
10 material to be produced, or "checked-out" from the providing source. When a copy of the
copy-protected material is subsequently returned, or "checked-in" to the providing source,
the usage allocation associated with this copy is returned to the total-usage-value. In this
manner, if a particular copy of the copy-protected material is lost, damaged, or misplaced,
the loss of value to the purchaser is merely a reduction in the available total-usage. In a
15 preferred embodiment, the parameters associated with the usage-limit are communicated
via the copy of the material in a secure manner, so that an illicit provider cannot alter these
parameters. Similarly, in a preferred embodiment, the parameters associated with the
usage-limit are securely bound to the copy-protected material, so that an illicit provider
cannot substitute illicit material for the copied material. Other security measures, such as
20 an encryption of the copy-protected material, watermarking, ticketing, and the like, are
also compatible with these aforementioned techniques, and are included in a preferred
embodiment of this invention.